



# SEAT PLEASANT NEWS

MARCH 2013 EDITION Visit us on the web at: [www.seatpleasantmd.gov](http://www.seatpleasantmd.gov)

## ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Benefits Available to Veterans</i> | 3 |
| <i>Be Aware of Your Surroundings</i>  | 4 |
| <i>Summer Youth Employment</i>        | 7 |

## City of Seat Pleasant

### Mayor

Eugene W. Grant

### Council President

Kelly Porter

(At-Large Councilmember)

### Ward I Councilmember

Elenora Simms

### Ward II Councilmember

Aretha Stephenson

### Ward III Councilmember

Reveral Yeargin

### Ward IV Councilmember

Gerald Raynor

### Ward V Councilmember

Eugene F. Kennedy

### At-Large Council member

Johnie L. Higgs, Sr.

### Acting City Administrator

Robert L. Ashton

### Treasurer

Robert L. Ashton

### Chief of Police

Chris Cotillio

### Director of Public Works

Johnny Thompson

### City Clerk

Dashaun Lanham

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE



The late El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) stated: "Of all of our studies history is best qualified to reward all research." Terry Pratchett said, "If you do not know where you come from, then you don't know where you are, and if you don't know where you are, then you don't know where you're going. And if you don't know where you're going, you're probably going wrong." With history as our foundation and understanding where we come from, we have a sense of knowing that we are moving toward A City of Excellence.

As I ponder our rich history, Greenwood, Tulsa, Oklahoma was one of the most successful and wealthiest communities for African-Americans in the country during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As blacks moved to the aforementioned area just before Oklahoma became a state in 1907, you could witness newly freed slaves building a strong and vibrant community which later became affectionately known as "Black Wall Street." Before the Tulsa Race Riot in 1921, this community thrived. They had pride and worked together to build a unique community that supported itself.

I believe that God has created fertile ground; a ground that is filled with the proper minerals and nutrients to sustain life. Metaphorically speaking, I believe that the fertile ground upon which we stand is our rich history and replete with numerous examples (like Tulsa) that are filled with the proper spiritual minerals and nutrients to help our communities grow into becoming A City of Excellence. The wisdom of our elders, the energy of our youth and the optimism of the working class of our community all have the elements that are inherent and will make our community A City of Excellence.

What is A City of Excellence? What does A City of Excellence look like? Well, first A City of Excellence is not a utopian society. It is not the end but the continued forward progression in the right direction in harnessing the best in human potential, human talent and our civilization. A City of Excellence is a community whose members conform to a set of principles that help to create a healthy, collegial and sustainable environment. It is a place that embraces morals, ethics, and values that are respectful to every member of the human family. It is a place where the hopes, dreams and aspirations of a people can be fulfilled.

It is my opinion, place matters. Where you live helps to define, mold and shape our individual and collective thoughts of which we claim ourselves to be. Generally, speaking our behavior usually is the result of our upbringing and our social interactions influenced in some way or another because of our association or lack thereof, with other human beings. This "place", A City of Excellence must strive toward having strong schools, livable wage employment, safe streets, accessible recreation, an engaged faith community, ecologically friendly environment, affordable housing and primary or urgent care services.

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(MAYOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED)

Along those lines, research has shown that where you live influences how long and healthy you live, and consequently, place matters. Our "place" is A City of Excellence and we want the results of our living to be strong and vibrant. The socioeconomic challenges that face us must be met head on. We must challenge ourselves daily to improve our conditions within and without of our homes. We must become more involved in the affairs of our community and government. We must not sit idle criticizing but be part of the revolution of change that helps our community become better. If we get involved and put our shoulders to the wheel we will eventually become A City of Excellence.

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## OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK



The City Council did not introduce or pass any legislation for the month of February.

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Mayor and City Council will meet on the following days in the month of February.

Monday, March 4, 2013

**Regular Work Session**

Time: 6:00p.m.

Monday, March 11, 2013

**Public Session**

Time: 7:00p.m.

The meetings will be held at:

Seat Pleasant City Hall

Council Chambers

6301 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, MD 20743-2125

If you desire to speak before the Council at the Public Session, please contact the City Clerk to register your concerns before the meeting.

Publication Mailing:

The Gazette Newspaper has discontinued the FREE home delivery of the paper to each resident in the City of Seat Pleasant. However, they have expanded the bulk delivery services to the following locations:

Seat Pleasant City Hall  
6301 Addison Road  
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743

Seat Pleasant Activity Center  
5720 Addison Road  
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743

Safeway Stores, Inc.  
6300 Central Avenue  
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743

Fairmount Heights Public Library  
5904 Kolb St.  
Fairmount Heights, MD 20743

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## A WORD FROM COUNCILMEMBER SIMMS



The Farmer's Market will soon be open again in the City of Seat Pleasant. We are looking for farmers who are interested in selling their wares. If you are a farmer interested in being a part of Seat Pleasant's Farmer's Market, please call 301-336-2600..



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## IMPORTANT BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VETERAN

By Robert Ashton, Acting City Administrator and City Treasurer

The purpose of this article is to share with residents in the City of Seat Pleasant the potential benefits available to veterans in the following areas:

- [Property Tax Exemption](#)
- [Military Retired Pay Income Tax Exemption](#)
- [Vessel Excise Tax](#)
- [Vehicle Registration](#)


[NOTE: This article also contains internal links to help you explore these benefits further.

### Property Tax Exemption:

A property tax exemption is available to the following individuals, for their primary residence located in the State of Maryland:

- Veterans who are 100 percent disabled for service-connected causes. The exemption passes to the veteran's spouse upon his or her death.
- Surviving spouse of active duty military personnel who died in the line of duty.
- Surviving spouse of a totally disabled veteran
- A spouse who receives the dependency and indemnity compensation

Use the links below to download the appropriate form, or contact your county's tax assessor's office or 1-888-246-5941.

[Property Tax Exemption - 100% disabled Veteran](#) 

[Property Tax Exemption - Surviving Spouse of 100% Disabled Veteran](#) 

[Property Tax Exemption - Surviving Spouse of Active Duty Military Personnel Killed in the Line of Duty](#) 

### Military Retired Pay Income Tax Exemption

Military retirees are exempt from Maryland income tax on the first \$5000 of their retirement income. In addition, military retirees who are over the age of 65, totally disabled, or who have a spouse who is totally disabled, receive an additional subtraction. For more information call 1-800-MD-TAXES.

### Vessel Excise Tax

Active duty military personnel are exempt from the 5% vessel excise tax levied on the sale, resale or transfer of a vessel. The exemption is for not more than one year to current owners of vessels who are members of the armed services and who are serving on active duty. For more information go to the [MD Department of Natural Resources](#) web site.

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(VETERANS BENEFITS CONTINUED)

### Vehicle Registration - Tax Credit

Active duty military members establishing residency in Maryland are eligible for a tax credit for any titling tax paid in another state when titling and registering a vehicle within one year of moving to Maryland. For more information, go to the [MD Department of Motor Vehicles](#) web site.

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## BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

### A WORD FROM CHIEF OF POLICE CHRIS COTILLO

As a young police officer when I first met my wife she used to call me paranoid because I was always looking around monitoring my surroundings. As police officers this is something we do unconsciously in order to survive on the streets.



Being aware of your surroundings, especially as you are walking to your vehicle, is one of the most important tasks that you can do in your day-to-day life to protect yourself from becoming a victim. If you routinely park in a parking garage at work be aware of the vehicles parked beside and around you. You will be more conscious of an out of place vehicle or a suspicious person in the area if you know whose suppose to be there at any given time. The same applies if you park in an open area, your home garage, at the local shopping mall, or the local grocery store. Also:

- Have your keys ready as you approach your vehicle. Taking time to find your keys when you reach the vehicle presents the opportunity for an attack. You can also put the keys between your fingers and use them as a weapon if attacked.
- If you feel you are being followed, as you walk to your vehicle, continue on to a populated area and summon help. If you get into your vehicle an assailant may be able to smash or break a window and you would be in a poor position to defend yourself.
- Whenever possible back your vehicle into parking spaces. This allows for a quick getaway and a clear view to see if someone is approaching your vehicle.
- Remember to always take a peek in your backseat to ensure no one has gotten inside your vehicle while it was parked.

Self defense is an ongoing process which includes awareness of the situation that you are currently in. The more aware you are of your surroundings the better you can protect yourself, your family, your property and others. And yes my wife still thinks I'm paranoid but now she understands why.

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## CODE ENFORCEMENT F.Y.I.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED A CORRECTIVE ACTION NOTICE

It is important to understand that a corrective action notice is **NOT A FINE**. It is an opportunity to take action to remedy a violation before a fine is levied. Every corrective action notice references:

- the section of the Municipal Code which constitutes the violation
  - a description of the violation
  - what corrective action(s) need to be taken to abate the violation
- a deadline date stating when the corrective action(s) must be completed

If you are unable to complete the corrective action by the deadline date or if you have other questions, you

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need to contact the code enforcement or nuisance & abatement officer at 301-499-8700.

### OTHER USEFUL TIPS

- Spring is right around the corner and there are some code violations that we're asking our residents to be aware of such as rusted fences, peeled and chipped paint and oxidations stains on the exterior of your house.
- Information Related to International Property Maintenance Code 304.2 Protective Treatment- All exterior surfaces, including, but not limited to, doors, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, balconies, decks and fences, shall be maintained in good condition. Exterior wood surfaces, other than decay resistant woods, shall be protected from the elements and decay by painting or other protective covering treatment. Peeling, flaking and chipped paint shall be eliminated and surfaces repainted. All siding and masonry joints, as well as those between the building envelope and the perimeter of windows, doors skylights, shall be maintained weather resistant and water tight. All metal surfaces subject to rust or corrosion shall be coated to inhibit such rust and corrosion, and all surfaces with rust or corrosion shall be stabilized and coated to inhibit future rust and corrosion. Oxidation stains shall be removed from the exterior surfaces. Surfaces designed for stabilization by oxidation are exempt from this requirement.



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### A WORD FROM PUBLIC WORKS

## \*\*\*\*NOTICE TO RESIDENTS\*\*\* STREET SWEEPING WILL BEGIN MARCH 1ST IN THE CITY OF SEAT PLEASANT.

Sweeping will be done on the left side of the street on Tuesdays and will require no parking on that side from 9:00am - 3:00pm. On Fridays sweeping will be done on the right side of the street and will require no parking on that side from 9:00am - 3:00pm. We need your cooperation to keep our streets clean!



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### A WORD FROM CPAC

#### NIXLE

Have you ever heard of Nixle? It's a fantastic, FREE community system that connects public safety agencies to residents via text, web, or email so residents can be informed of important alerts and notifications. So, what does that really mean? It means that you can receive instant, up-to-date information ranging from critical alerts to community news from places like the Prince Georges County Police Department. You can also receive alerts from the Maryland State Police, Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company, the Library, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and tons of other agencies from our area and across the country. I get text messages whenever there's an Amber alert and I have even signed up with MD Parks & Recreation and they let me know when various centers are closing (like for weather, etc.). Nixle works with 4600 public safety agencies across the United States and these agencies constantly update their databases so you're getting the

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agencies across the United States and these agencies constantly update their databases so you're getting the most current and accurate information.

Nixle helps you stay connected to the information that means the most to you. It allows you to select the location you want to get information from and also lets you choose how you want to receive it – do you want it by text or email? Signing up for Nixle is so easy and you can become a part of it two different ways. You can send a text message with your zip code directly to them and become instantly registered to receive text messages in our area. Or, you can customize your account so it fits your needs – just go to **nixle.com** and follow the prompts. It even gives you the flexibility to direct messages based on priority so that you can receive urgent information via text and the rest via email.

This is such a wonderful system and a great way to be notified right away when something is going on. For more information about this valuable, FREE resource, please check out [nixle.com](http://nixle.com).

Knowledge is power – the more we know, the more we can do. Let's keep Seat Pleasant safe! If there's anything you'd like CPAC to discuss with the Seat Pleasant Police Department or Fire Department, please email us at [cpac.seatpleasant@live.com](mailto:cpac.seatpleasant@live.com).

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## NEWS FROM THE SEAT PLEASANT FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Prince George's County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (PGFD) Chief Marc Bashoor announced that career staffing would be removed from the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company Inc. (SPVFC) effective March 4, 2013. The company is a volunteer corporation, but is supplemented with career staffing Mon-Fri from 7am until 3pm with 4 employees, one officer (Captain), one technician, and two fire fighter/emergency medical technicians (FF/EMT). After 3pm weekdays and from 3pm Friday until 7am Monday the career staffing is reduced to two FF/EMT's. The career staffing ensures fire protection and emergency medical services during the hours where volunteer staffing is low due to work, family, and other personal issues that need to be addressed during the week.

The paid PGFD employees will be moved approximately 0.9 miles away to the Capital Heights Volunteer Fire Department. The County stated that the reason for move is due to budget constraints; however the same amount of employees with the same salary will be operating out of the Capital Heights station. The response area for Capital Heights is 1.16 square miles versus the 4.16 square mile response area for the Seat Pleasant station.

Within the coming weeks, the leadership of the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company Inc. will be meeting with the Mayor and City Council to report on the staffing plan for the department. If you have any questions about this situation, residents are encouraged to call 301-836-1957 for more information.

Unfortunately, staffing isn't the only removal the County is pushing for from the Seat Pleasant residents. Over the last year, the residents were faced with the news of the removal of the busiest rescue squad in the County (which was located at company 808), and the removal of the fire department from the City of Seat Pleasant into Capitol Heights. The removal of the staffing may mean longer wait times from emergency medical and fire personnel when it matters most.

## MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITIONAL MONTH

“Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day” is the theme of this year’s National Nutrition Month celebrated in March across America. Because dietary nutrients change as we age, National Nutrition Month is an excellent time to make sure senior loved ones’ diets include more of the following:

- **Calcium and Vitamin D** to help maintain strong bone health. Older adults should eat three servings of vitamin D-fortified low-fat or free-free milk or yogurt daily. Other sources of calcium-rich foods include dark green leafy vegetables, canned fish and fortified cereals and fruit juices.
- **Vitamin B12** is often low in people older than 50. Lean meat, fortified cereals and some fish and sea-food are excellent sources of vitamin B12.
- **Potassium** is found in fruits, vegetables, and milk and yogurt products. To lower high blood pressure, seniors should increase potassium in their diets while reducing sodium or salt intake.
- **Fiber** found in whole-grain breads and cereals, beans, peas, fruits and vegetables is a natural way to stay regular, prevent Type 2 diabetes, control weight and lower one’s risk for heart disease.
- **Healthier Fats** found in olive oil and peanut oil, for example, are considered polyunsaturated or monounsaturated vs. saturated and trans fats found in many commercially processed and baked foods.

To help people think about healthy food choices, the U.S. Department of Agriculture presents the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) with the five essential food groups and offers the [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) website with recommended daily calorie allowances, nutrition tips, and sample menus and recipes.

## CITY HOLDS ITS ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM



The City of Seat Pleasant held its annual Black History Month Program on February 28th at 7 p.m. at the Seat Pleasant Activity Center. The evening featured a performance by award winning actress Bonita Brisker star of *Bonnie and Billie*, an original production which she not only starred in but also wrote. The theatrical musical production was based on the untold story of Billie Holiday. Mr. Wesley Mountain, a gifted and talented singer, also performed several songs for the event and City Council members also contributed their talents.

## ATTENTION SEAT PLEASANT YOUTH!!

THE CITY WILL ONCE AGAIN HAVE ITS SUMMER YOUTH JOB TRAINING PROGRAM. YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN 10TH AND TWELFTH GRADE (AGES 15 –17) INTERESTED IN SUMMER JOBS CAN OBTAIN AN APPLICATION AT SEAT PLEASANT CITY HALL. APPLICATIONS MUST BE RETURNED WITH ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION BY APRIL 15TH.



City of Seat Pleasant

*"A City of Excellence"*

6301 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743



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**THE MAYOR  
AND  
CITY COUNCIL  
WISH YOU  
AND  
YOURS  
A HAPPY EASTER**